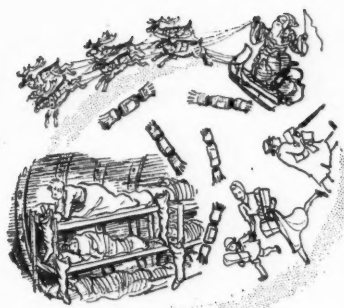




# PUNCH

OR  
THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CXCIX No. 5206

December 25 1940

## Charivaria

THE radio stations of Rome, Florence, and Milan were recently reported to have gone off the air. Possibly to allow listeners to take a deep breath.

It has been ascertained that most people do not use the ear-plugs issued by the Government. Well, for one thing, the carol barrage has been very light this year.

We see it stated that the instalment system has been adopted by natives of Africa. After all it's the only way to eat elephants.



"The small-calibre bomb makes a noise quite different from the large," says a writer. Yes, a mere crumpet.

Three Italian Generals were captured in the sudden attack on Sidi Barrani. Before they could even resign.

### Impending Apology

"THE SQUEAK OF A PIG  
MAYOR OPENS SALE FOR RED  
CROSS"

Local Paper.



Now that the Greeks have captured Argyrocastro it is only fair to mention that our B.B.C. announcers made several gallant attempts at it.

hint would be to arrange that the railway signals at Brenner Pass should be set permanently at green.

A Tokio official recently stated that it was not Japan's idea to conquer China. This policy is meeting with great success.

"De Valera must not bow down to Hitler and the I.R.A. or 250,000,000 Liverpool Irishmen will know the reason why."

Daily Paper.

But nobody could tell them all at once.

Our sympathy just now is with the photographer who asked Signor MUSSOLINI to "look pleasant."



## Home Guard Goings-On

### Winter Quarters

**W**E have taken a bungalow. In the summer, it may be remembered, we took the late Mr. Gadger's butcher's shop, and later on the Lady Members' Rest Room in the Club-house; autumn saw us successively in the Schools (by kind permission of the County Education Committee), the British Legion Hut, and the Village Hall of icy memory. For the winter we have taken a dear little bungalow.

But perhaps this is a misstatement. It cannot be very dear or we should never have taken it. As a matter of fact it is not yet certain whether it has been taken by us or by Sir Edward Grigg on our behalf; at our own suggestion we are giving over the sum of sixpence a night out of our pay (or subsistence allowance, as some like to call it), but whether this is for rent, or merely rates, lighting, heating and cleaning is not really known.

Nor, remembering how easily we kept getting lost in it last night, can it justly be called little. It has two or three rec., at least two bed., with kitch., bath and a garden full of awkwardly-placed trees thrown in.

Our bungalow is called "Elle Vue," a piece of bad French due to a bit of the front gate having been at some time wrenched away and lost, together with the complementary letter "B." However, it is useful to be able to read even "Elle Vue" by the discreet light of our torches, as this prevents

confusion with the bungalow next door, which is built to an exactly similar pattern, but is called "Peacehaven." It was only towards the end of our first spell of duty that this useful tip was called to our notice by the residents at "Peacehaven," who said, standing in their bare feet, that while they had no objection to our shouting and tramping outside their gate all night if it meant winning the war, they felt bound to draw the line at being got out of bed every hour and a half to explain why the catch was down on their front door.

There is no luxury at "Elle Vue." The furnishings are sparse, consisting of an unresilient horse-hair sofa of unknown (or unconfessed) ownership, ten camp-beds (three of them incurably maimed), a large gardening-basket full of chipped cups, and a quantity of small cardboard boxes which, in the absence of our usual soap-dish, we used as ash-trays (for one performance only). There are no pictures on the walls—yet; the only mural decoration is the green baize notice-board transferred from H.Q. (which is itself to be transferred shortly, into our second-best bedroom). The notice-board bears sheaves of mimeographed announcements with such headings as "How to Clean Your Rifle," "Bicycles and Respirators," "Common German Phrases" and "Tactical Exercise, July 12th, 1940." There is also a moving appeal in faded handwriting, requesting

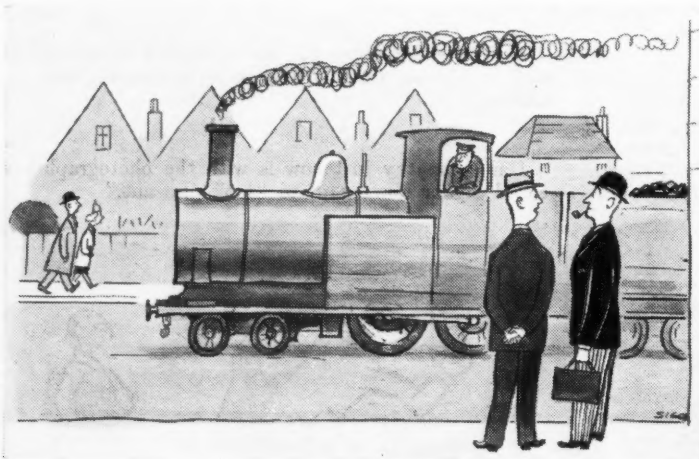
that a pair of blue braces, if found, should be returned to H. Tuffin of "D" Section.

The design of the bungalow confused us a little at first, and it may be some time yet before we can feel sure of making our way successfully to whatever part of the house we set out for. The original owner, we imagine, must have had second thoughts about the place after he had built it—or perhaps a subsequent owner didn't much care for the original owner's first thoughts. Whatever the cause, structural alterations have certainly been carried out and have resulted chiefly in an astonishing number of doors. The building is riddled with them, each room having at least three, and the house itself about half a dozen leading out into obscure corners of the garden, where ropes of creeper lie in wait to trip up the unwary, and sentinel trees lurk at every threshold to clump him over the head.

This multiplicity of exits and entrances was the cause of some delay in our settling down for the night. Mr. King, scuttling to and fro in a sort of first-day-of-term excitement, would rush a camp-bed out of a room by one door and at once bring it back by another, where he would set it up briskly in the corner from which he had just removed it, fully believing that he had taken it over to the far side of the house.

As we were all working with the same zest as Mr. King, the general effect was one of a sudden and unaccountable increase in our numbers. Mr. Benn, Mr. Punnett and Mr. Tucker, for instance, would no sooner leave the second best bedroom through one wall in search of blankets than they would troop in again through the wall adjoining; at the same time Mr. Curtis and Mr. Corker would be carrying out the reverse manoeuvre, so that when our Section Leader glanced up thoughtfully from his Orders of the Day he would be staggered to see nothing less than a March Past taking place before his very eyes. At one stage he began to count us quietly, but upon reaching the early twenties he passed a hand across his brow and went outside for a breath of air, wondering, no doubt, how on earth he was to make our six rifles go round.

Mr. Corker, whose civil occupation of A.A. patrolman equips him to deal with matters of this kind, ultimately established some semblance of order



"I see the line's blocked again."

by labelling various doors "IN" and "OUT," and locking up the remainder.

There are many points in favour of "Elle Vue." We are self-contained there, for one thing; we do not feel that the seat of our activities by night is given over by day to golfers, school-children and the like. The place is ours entirely, save of course for the Platoon's other five Sections, whose claims we are bound to recognize, if only with a slightly patronizing tolerance.

We have gas, we have water, and we are to have the telephone if the Post Office can be persuaded to put it in; we have a permanent black-out, not requiring to be augmented by great-coats, as was the case at the Schools, nor propped up by a Browning repeating rifle and a broom-handle, like the one at the Village Hall; it was even suggested that we should have a resident charlady, though this scheme was dropped on the grounds of that rigid propriety which governs us, as gentlemen if not officers, at all times. But our immediate joy in "Elle Vue" is because of its facilities for seasonable though suitably restrained celebrations of Christmas Day, 1940, on which isolated public holiday our Section will, the calendar tells us, be on duty. This prospect, now that we have a home of our own, is viewed with surprising fortitude. The more imaginative of us have even foreseen the festooning of the walls with gay streamers and the pleasing spectacle of our Section Leader, incorrectly dressed in a yellow paper hat, democratically pulling crackers with his men. Christmas in the Club-house, the Schools, or the Village Hall—that would have been a melancholy affair; in the bungalow we shall be able, with any luck, to keep it merry still.

But where there are pros. there must inevitably be cons. The main con. about "Elle Vue"—always supposing that we shall learn to find our way about the place, and not try to leave the garden by the back fence instead of the front gate—is that it is far removed from that piece of moorland which it is our privilege to guard. Neither the violent sounding of our ship's bell, hanging as it always does on the sentry-box nail, nor the firing of the sentry's rifle (or, indeed, anybody else's), nor the sounds of a struggle, nor the harsh gutturals we have been told to expect from the unfriendly—none of these noises could possibly carry from our solitary look-out to any of the rooms in our bungalow. This means that we are obliged to dispatch a lone patrol every ten minutes to see that the sentry is still there. All reports were

favourable last night, which was a night of rain and gale, but the point was raised as to what the lone patrol should do in the event of the sentry having disappeared—a point which has not yet been cleared up.

It is felt, particularly by sentries just off duty, that something should be done about the establishing of communications between the moor and "Elle Vue," although it is generally doubted whether a satisfactory scheme can be worked out. If the difficulties prove insurmountable then, as our Section Leader said in his unruffled way, we shall have to guard a different bit of moor in future, that's all.

"Lord Woolton's Christmas Box will be an allowance of 12 oz. of sugar and 4 oz. of sea in place of the existing rations of 8 oz. of sugar and 2 oz. of tea, for the one week beginning December 16th."

*Somerset Paper.*

Could we have a small piece of coast?

## Café Triste

MISS TOMKINSON, do you suppose

That you and I  
On this same day next year  
Will still be sitting here,

Eating this vegetable pie  
Covered with white glucose?

Can you visualize with ease

My ageing face  
Suspended here before your eyes,  
While moons set and suns rise,

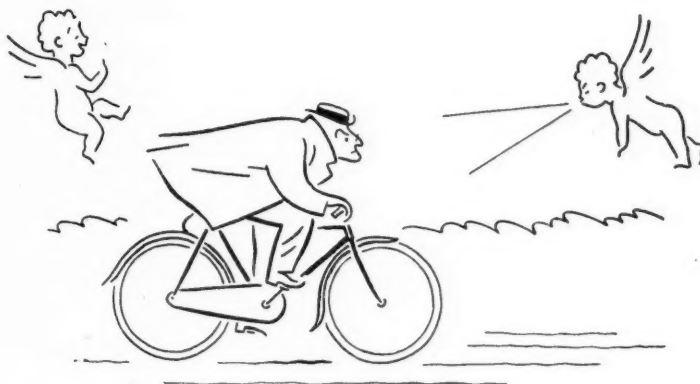
Bending towards the boiled plaice,  
The potatoes and the peas?

Miss Tomkinson, do you suppose

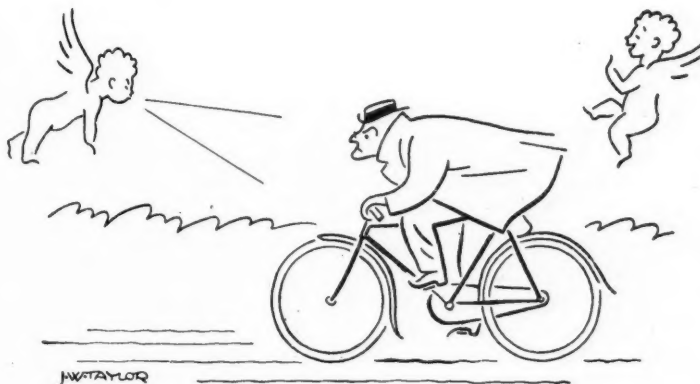
That next December  
We shall pause at the soup-spoon's  
brink

And awfully dreadfully think  
Of the following November?

Oh, Miss Tomkinson, do you suppose?  
V. G.



*To the Office—*



*and back.*

J.W. TAYLOR

## Chat in the Basement

"SO glad to see you, and I do hope you'll be comfortable. There's the camp-bed, or my aunt's mattress, or the sofa—perfectly all right if you curl up your legs a bit—or of course you can share the bed with me. Whichever you like."

"I do think it's very nice of you. The camp-bed, I think, if nobody else wants it."

"No, not on a Wednesday. The woman who uses it sleeps at her office on Wednesdays—they've got a really splendid boiler-room there, and they can fit in ten or twelve people. If—it's most unlikely, but if the first-floor people do come down here they may bring a sister-in-law who sometimes turns up—but she has her own rug and cushion and lies on the floor. She says it's marvellous."

"How splendid! They're starting a bit early to-night, aren't they?"

"Perhaps they are, but we can't expect them to be dead punctual, after all. As a matter of fact I always think they know *exactly* when I leave the office, and start then."

"How like them! It's like the way they *will* strew their beastly bombs between me and my office, so that I have to go miles round."

"Have some coffee?"

"I'd love it. Now, *can* we talk comfortably, because I've really got something frightfully special to tell you about."

"Yes. Unless my aunt brings in some of her canteen people. She does sometimes, and they just have coffee, and lie down on the floor, and go out about two or three o'clock, or whenever they're on duty. It's rather funny to hear them creeping about like mice and the most *terrific* bangs and cracks going on overhead all the time."

"How frightfully funny!"

"Yes, it often makes me laugh. Here's your coffee."

"Thank you so much. Well—you know silk stockings?"

"Silk stockings!!!"

"Yes, definitely silk stockings. Good gracious! do you think that was this house?"

"No, I don't think so. Unless it was an incendiary, which aren't so frightfully noisy. I'd better just pop up and see."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Was it?"

"No. Go on about the silk stockings."

"Well, my dear, I tried all the usual

places and there were simply queues and queues of women, and I saw I hadn't got a chance."

"That was the Cumberland Park gun. Isn't it angelic? I adore it. . . . Go on."

"So do I. . . . Well, it suddenly occurred to me that I could write to Pumbleton Parva, *miles* from anywhere, and see if they'd got any in stock. I don't suppose they sell one pair in six months, as a rule. So I wrote to my old governess who lives there."

"How brilliant! There—do you notice how the house shakes and *still* doesn't fall down? I do call it good."

"So do I. They sound as if they were absolutely looking down the chimney at us, don't they?"

"Yes, exactly. Have some more coffee."

"Thanks."

"And do go on. (Never mind that, I should think it was yards away.)"

"My dear, she was wonderful. She dashed off, bought up the entire stock—a dozen pair—and sent them to me. Did you ever hear anything like it?"

"Like the stockings, do you mean, or this Blitzkrieg affair?"

"Well, both, as a matter of fact—but I really meant the stockings. Still, the Blitzkrieg is a bit noticeable at the minute, isn't it?"

"Personally I never will take any notice of it. I'm sure they hate being ignored more than anything. Let's have some more coffee, and go on about the stockings. My aunt will be thrilled. Here she is."



"Oh, hallo! Is that coffee?"

"Hallo. Is it very noisy out?"

"It is, rather. My bus flew like the wind. Who's a young man with bright red hair sitting on the bottom step of the stairs with two spaniels?"

"A friend of the people on the second floor. They've lent him their flat, but he likes the bottom step, at night. I wonder if he'd like some coffee."

"I expect he would. The spaniels were sweet."

"I'll call them all down, shall I? Now *that*, I'm perfectly certain, is one of ours."

"More like ten of ours, if you ask me."

"Personally I thought it sounded like twenty of ours bringing down fifty of theirs. On this very roof."

"Have some more coffee."

"Yes, please."

"And go on about the silk stockings."

"Stockings? *Silk* ones?"

"Isn't it wonderful? Is there plenty more coffee?"

"Any amount. By the by, is anyone using the sofa to-night, because I offered it to a couple of Red Cross women. They'll be in presently."

"I dare say they'd like some coffee."

\* \* \* \* \*

"I thought they really had got us that time."

"So did I. Absolutely. Those are our own guns, now. Aren't they too twee?"

"Honestly I never know which are the bombs and which are the guns. They all sound exactly alike to me."

"Have some more coffee."

"Go on about the stockings."

"Well, I've got them—twelve pair—but the awful thing is, they're not my size, and I shall simply have to pass them on to anyone who—"

"Goodness! That must have been pretty close."

"Have some more coffee."

"Would you say they were just having fun, or definitely trying to find this very spot?"

"Oh, never mind all that. What does it matter? What I want to know is, *what* size are the silk stockings?"

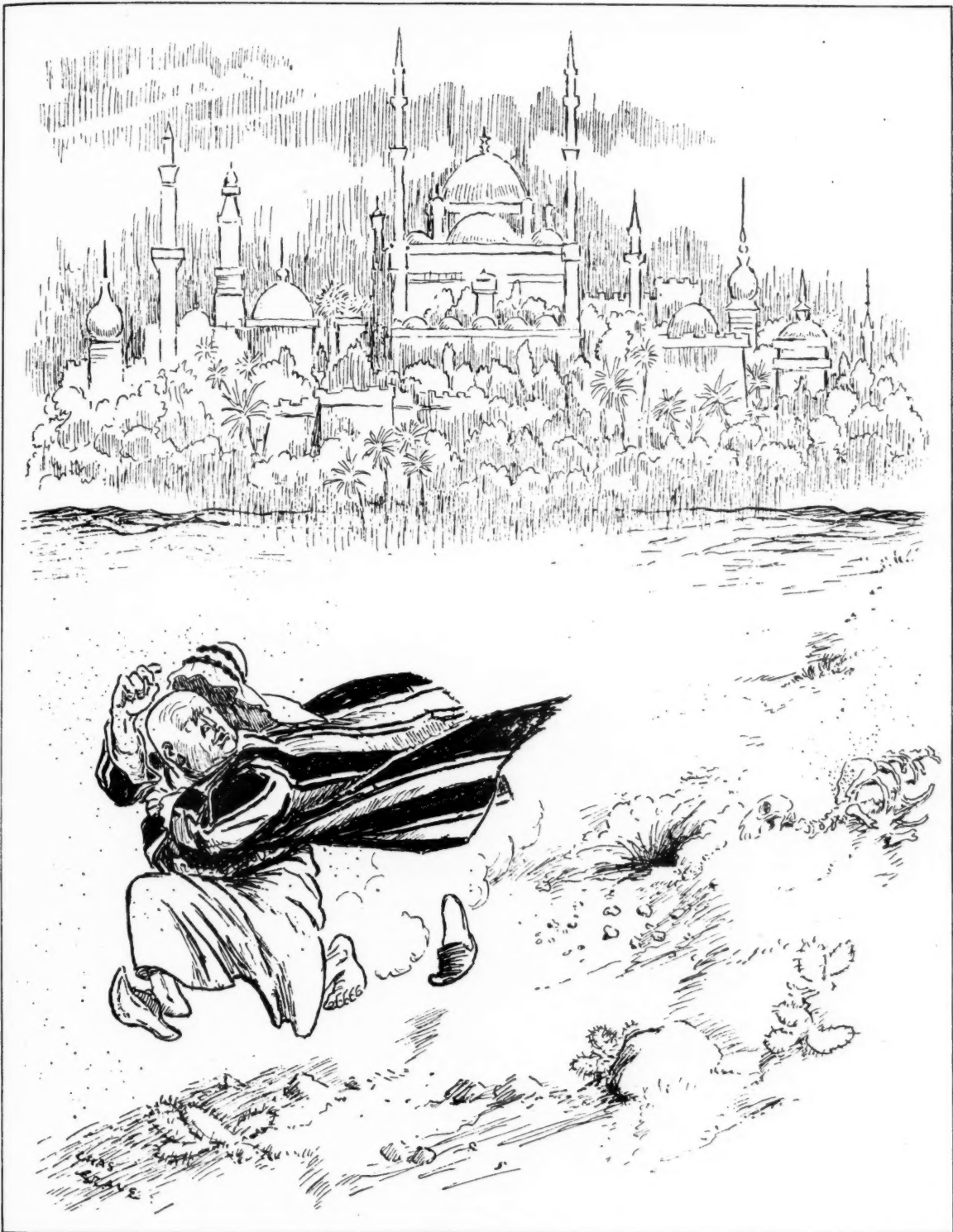
E. M. D.

"Guest Room for the flat visitor."

Advt. in Daily Paper.

One might almost use the linen-cupboard.





THE ARAB'S FAREWELL TO HIS MIRAGE



*"As a matter of fact, I'm looking for a piebald horse."*

## The Boxy Bed

**F**OR the first time in its history Rathberry's so-called Boxy Bed has leaped into undesired prominence—a bed that has nothing whatever to do with sleeping accommodation. It is a narrow border of clay, stretching from the window of the miniature booking-office to the door of the comfortless waiting-room of the little railway station, where a horticulturally-minded official of years ago once planted, with careful exactness, an array of cuttings from box plants.

These, he assured the interested but somewhat dubious spectators, spelled the name RATHBERRY. According to the elderly porter, then a youth, the watchers had viewed the plants from every possible angle but had failed to make anything at all out of the strange order in which they stood in the flower bed. At least, most of them had failed, but the porter himself—known

locally as Box Mahon, whether because of the plants or because of the goods with which he wrestled from time to time was not certain—said he had seen distinctly the name BELL KELLY that very day. But, as he admitted reluctantly, he could not make even that out of it except now and then when he came on the border suddenly: then, it seemed, the two words "lepped up on the minute an' hot him in the two eyes," retiring immediately into what he called a sort of a reserve.

"The first time the boss clipped them plants I seen RATHBERRY for what it was," he admits handsomely, "an' when he was ruz to Ballykealy I gev him me thrustud word I'd clip them letthers constant; an' so I did. An' now them Security boyos are on for diggin' up the whole affair, afther the poor boss havin' to turn his face everyway to do it as connie as it

is, an' the station gettin' first prize this year for the best herbaceous set-out; an' then for them Defended Volunteers to come here in their overalls an' to want to dig up the boxy bed. 'I dunno what great good there is in tearin' down the name of this place,' the fella that's over them says to me, 'when you have it spread out in that bordher for every descender to see for hisself as soon as ever he rids his showlders of his ould para-shoot an' thravels be the branch line. If so be you won't uproot them letthers,' he says, 'you must do something to camel-flag them, an' do it quick,' says he, 'for there's a woeful great hurry come upon Eire lattherly, as dawdle-some as she was before.'"

It was not easy for the porter to change his attitude to his treasured Boxy Bed and to keep it in the back-ground instead of forcing it upon the

attention of unfamiliar passengers, who must now be discouraged from reading the name. His spreading of two back numbers of *The Mediator* over the narrow border only succeeded in making people notice it more; especially people from Derreen, whose own railway station was runner-up for the recently awarded prize and whose railway officials are determined to win it next year.

One deeply interested Derreen man left the train at Rathberry in order to see for himself just what had been shrouded by the sheets of newspaper. "I knew it for the Boxy Bed right enough," he told his friends later, "but I was full sure they must have some great new breed in it that couldn't stand anny sort of hardship at all. But no, there was th' alphabet the same as ever it was, an Box Mahon broodin' over it, an' everyone hangin' out of the thrain windas axin' was the first heavy frost afther hittin' Rathberry already that he had to cover over his geramias. He says he might as well be in full charge of the Botanic Gardens in Dublin, where his sister's young lad has a job tidying up the paths, for it seems be him they do all be persecuted sthrivin' to paci-fy the people that goes there for insight into flowers. The young fella says he could say a whole lot about dead leaves at the present time, for his heart is scalded wid them lightin' down a foot deep as soon as ever he has a big compliment of them in the barra. Annyway, Box Mahon has nothin' below *The Mediathor* that's new, only he's in pure dhread of the Local Securities desthroyin' the name onct an' for all, for there's no doubt they're woeful sharp. They're that sharp they could shave a mouse, so they could, an' it asleep."

For some days advice has been hurled from the open windows of briefly-halted trains; some of the advice is really meant to be helpful, but most of it is facetious in the extreme.

Yesterday evening Box Mahon accomplished the camouflaging ordered by the leader of the Local Security Force. At this job he was assisted willingly by his own brother-in-law, who, having purchased the standing crop of two large meadows, now finds himself with more hay than he can dispose of in a district where everyone else seems to have enough.

Preliminary discussions ended, there was digging and replanting and cautious journeyings from the long narrow border to the round bed at the other end of the platform. When the work was done the two men stood back and gazed

with satisfaction, first at one boxy bed, then at the other. They were in complete agreement that the green letters in the border now conveyed nothing whatever, having been reduced to R-T-BERR. The transplanted letters said YAH, and formed, in the opinion of the porter, a fittingly derisive answer to all unspoken questionings as to where R-T-BERR might be.

This morning the seven-fifteen from Dublin and Box Mahon arrived at the station almost simultaneously, so that there was no time for a last complacent look at the round bed. But seeing one of the passengers lean from the window and gaze in a bewildered way at the long border, the porter walked beside the train when it started again, and waited for his reactions to the word YAH. But as he passed, the stranger

brightened visibly and called out, "The very thing I'm looking for! I'll be back this way to-night."

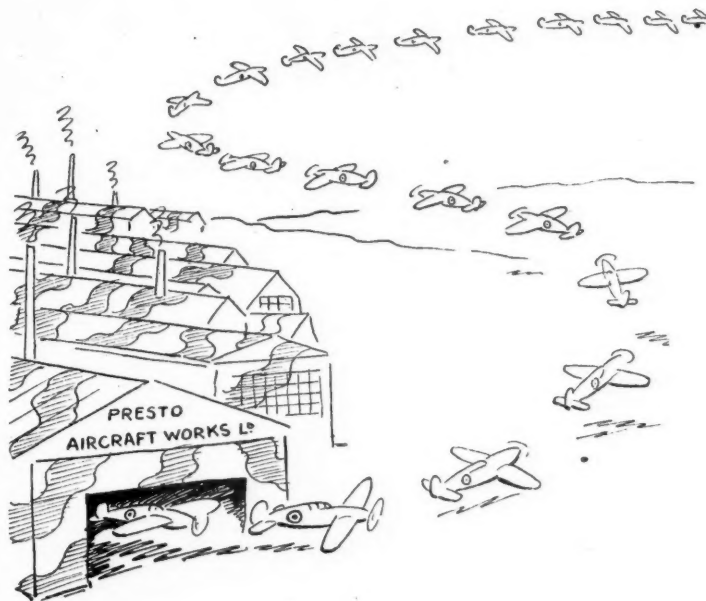
Box Mahon looked at the three letters: they now spelt HAY. When he spoke, his words referred to the brother-in-law who had not only stolen his thunder but had managed to advertise his own stock of fodder.

"The less I praise that fella," he said grimly, "the less I lie." D. M. L.

#### O si sic omnes . . . !

"Two meetings of American officials and British purchasing officials were held late yesterday at the Treasury, at which all who took part preserved complete silence. Further conferences took place to-day."

Daily Telegraph.



J. L. ARTHUR

"Of course we COULD produce them faster, but we don't want them to bump into one another."

## At the Pictures

## LAUGHTER

It must be a nice change for you to find a film article that doesn't begin with a notice of *The Great Dictator*. I haven't, at the time of writing, seen it—and what do you care? It is with this as with that other picture that everybody had heard of, *Gone With the Wind*: you know whether you are going to see it, you know already more or less what you think of it, you know very nearly exactly what it's all about. I shall not allow this to deter me from saying something about it next time, but I do feel called upon to explain why you are not getting my ineffectual remarks at the same time as everybody else's.

All the same, we can begin with an excellent comedy: *I Love You Again* (Director: W. S. VAN DYKE II). The laughter you get from this piece is not, most of it, of the same kind as that you may expect from Mr. CHAPLIN; but there is a great deal of it. The principals are WILLIAM POWELL and MYRNA LOY, but this is not a *Thin Man* story, and no crime more serious than an attempted oil swindle is allowed to shadow the gleaming surface of nonsense. The mainspring of the plot is amnesia: *Larry Wilson* (Mr. POWELL), once a charming confidence-trickster, lost his memory and his disposition as a result of a blow on the head and for nine years lived another life as an entirely different and much less agreeable, though more moral, kind of man. In this nine years he somehow managed to marry *Kay* (Miss LOY); and the picture begins with his getting another knock on the head which wipes out the nine years and the morality and returns him to his wife, whom he doesn't recognize, as the unprincipled but engaging *George Carey*. An unbeatable situation, brilliantly handled. Mr. POWELL is a first-rate comedian, and there is also, among other people, FRANK McHUGH.

Our home-grown efforts to amuse make, I regret to say, a very much poorer show. The basic idea of

*Sailors Three* (Director: WALTER FORDE) is that of the capture by three British sailors of a German pocket-battleship; but its comic force is



[I Love You Again]

## OLD BOY RANGER

*Larry Wilson* . . . . . WILLIAM POWELL



## YOUNG SALTS

<i>Johnny</i> . . . . .	MICHAEL WILDING
<i>Tommy</i> . . . . .	TOMMY TRINDER
<i>Llewellyn</i> . . . . .	CLAUDE HULBERT

[Sailors Three]

vitiated throughout by that pernicious British-films habit of thinking in types. The heroine, as in all British comedies, is the capable, level-eyed, thoroughly nice blonde who has appeared in every light (lowbrow) novel since 1920 (and, as in so many British comedies, it would make very little difference to the story if she were not there); the children are The Mischievous Brats who destroy everything; their uncle is The Absent-Minded and Ineffectual Professor, their aunt The Feather-brained Lady who says the wrong thing; and so on. The story involves that never-failing type-scene, the swift and consecutive laying-out on the mass-production principle of a long line of minor villains. The three sailors of the title are TOMMY TRINDER, CLAUDE HULBERT and MICHAEL WILDING, and they have their moments; but on the whole the picture is not one to be proud of.

I got more laughs, to be honest, out of the Crazy Gang in *Gasbags* (Director: MARCEL VARNEL), which nevertheless makes the mistake of trying to be funny about what goes on in a Nazi concentration camp. I must admit, all the same, that the concentration-camp scenes aroused just as much laughter from the audience as the rest. Perhaps it is always safe to assume that the average person at the pictures doesn't think.

But as I imply, parts of the rest made me laugh. There is of course a great deal of crudity. Like nearly all music-hall comedians, the Crazy Gang have only a rudimentary critical sense—they will produce a bit of first-rate business, a line devastatingly and even subtly comic, and follow it with a piece of childish clumsiness, expecting each to get the same sort and volume of laughter. But here and there are bits of excellent fooling.

One thing that puzzles me about British film farces—and stage farces and music-hall sketches, for that matter—is the infallibly uproarious reaction to the word "twirp." For goodness' sake, can one always make people laugh by calling somebody a twirp? Is that all that's necessary in the equipment of a comedian? R. M.



*It's not fair to say that it's difficult to get the entrée into the various war-time Ministries . . . .*

*Jung*



*Not only is it—*



*perfectly easy—*



*to get—*



*into them—*



*and through them—*



*and round them—*



*and over them—*



*and across them—*



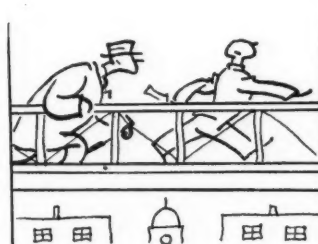
*and all about them—*



*but it's—*



*equally easy—*



*to—*



*stay in them indefinitely.*



*"Once upon a time there was a princess who lived in a garden full of rows and rows and rows of lovely onions . . ."*

### *To My Wellington Bomber*

**W**HEN first we met I felt afraid;  
 You looked so cumbersome and staid,  
 Standing quietly near some trees,  
 Shuddering gently in the breeze;  
 It seemed incredible to me  
 That you and I would ever see  
 Vast tracts of German territory.  
 Then d'you remember our first flight?  
 Climbing steadily through the night  
 We went to Bremen, I believe,  
 Or was it Kiel, or Ludenschieve?  
 But, anyway, I could surmise  
 That in spite of your great size  
 You loved your element—the skies.  
 Then other raids that we went through;  
 Each one an epic, each one new,  
 Each one filled with thrills and fears,  
 Sweating, sick, and near to tears—

Memories that will last for years.  
 And what about the Berlin raid  
 When, on returning home, we strayed  
 And Emden shot us "up to hell,"  
 Rotterdam, Gladbach, Koln as well,  
 And, faltering, we nearly fell—  
 But, as before on frenzied nights,  
 You dived steeply, and curved lights  
 Of tracer-shells scorched through your frame,  
 Explosions rocked you—but this game  
 Of cheating death brought *you* no fame.

\* \* \* \* \*

And if one night we don't return  
 There'll be another star to burn,  
 Brighter than the rest—descending,  
 Reflecting on the clouds, and lending  
 Glorious colours to our ending..



### THE BANDITS' FEAST

"I've said it once, and I'll say it again, the British are starving Europe."



## Mr. PUNCH'S HOSPITAL COMFORTS FUND

(Registered under the War Charities Act, 1940)

**THIS** Fund, which was originally started in order to purchase supplies of raw material and distribute them to Voluntary Working Parties for the Hospitals, has already sent out a very large quantity of Knitting Wool, Unbleached Calico and Veltex, as well as many other materials of all varieties, to be made up into comforts for the wounded.

The number of casualties now caused by the indiscriminate bombing of London and other cities, especially in the Midlands, the South-West and on the South Coast, has made it necessary to extend the operation of our Fund to the provision of medical and surgical supplies for civilian hospitals.

At the same time the approach of winter is causing a renewed demand on behalf of all the Services—especially amongst the men whose duty lies in exposed situations—for Balaclava helmets, gloves, mittens, woollen waistcoats, and the like.

Mr. Punch, in expressing his very sincere gratitude for the generous help already given by subscribers, renews therefore his appeal both for the sake of the Fighting Services and of civilians who have suffered from the ruthless barbarity of the enemy, in the hope that plenty of supplies may be available for all now that the severest and coldest weather has set in.

Though we know well that these are days of great financial difficulty, we yet ask you, those who can, to send some donation, large or small, according to your means, to PUNCH HOSPITAL COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.





*"Oh, yes, Boss, it's quicker by air—but only two months and four days."*

### Taking Exercise

**T**HERE are two sorts of people in the world, the fat ones and the thin ones. Some men can eat sausages-and-mash and steamed suet-pudding all day and retain their lean and hungry look. Other men can go without breakfast, and lunch on orange-juice, and still increase their girth. But it is not until middle age approaches that one discovers into which category one falls.

There are plenty of people who will deny the simple and well-established facts. They are health cranks of a major order, who are agreed one and all that there is something wrong with a man if he begins to put on weight, and to assist them in their knavery they have given an honest word a corrupt meaning. If a man goes fat they declare that he is suffering from obesity.

There is nothing at all wrong with the word obese. It means "having eaten," and it was coined in the days when a man expected to swell as the result of a meal. But on the lips of a

health crank it has a sinister sound. It can drive stout men to distraction, wreck careers and shatter homes. That is what it came near to doing to Lionel Turner.

This Mr. Turner was a model of moderation. He was regular in his habits, he ate and drank no more than sufficed his needs, he lived in a small but comfortable house, and for twenty-five years he had occupied a position of trust in a solicitor's office. Never in his whole life had he done anything to make himself conspicuous, until a man he met in the train one morning told him he was suffering from obesity.

Mr. Turner's house was two hundred and five yards two feet from the station, and he always kissed his wife good-bye at exactly eight minutes before his train was due. This allowed him plenty of time to buy his morning paper, glance at the headlines, open it to the financial page, and fold it neatly before his train drew in. On this particular morning, however, Mr. Turner was late. Mrs. Turner had just engaged a

new maid called Gladys, and Mrs. Turner had had to call Gladys three times before she got up and brought Mr. Turner his shaving-water. In consequence Mr. Turner nearly missed his train. He was forced to run hard for the last hundred yards, and then had to leap into a carriage as the train was moving. This was a thing that Mr. Turner had never done before in his life, and the shock of the experience, combined with the exertion, made him both pant and perspire. Mr. Turner threw himself into a corner seat, breathed deeply and quickly, and took out a clean pocket-handkerchief to mop his brow. When he had recovered slightly he saw that he was being eyed expectantly by a stranger in the opposite seat.

"A close shave, that," said Lionel Turner, in answer to the expectant look.

"Yes," said the stranger. "Run far?"

"Not far," said Mr. Turner.

The stranger hummed. "Shouldn't



*"It said '... and stop' and then faded out."*

make you so short of breath," he remarked.

"No," answered Mr. Turner. "Not so young as I was, you know."

The stranger leant forward and tapped Lionel Turner on the knee with the forefinger of his right hand.

"Obesity," he said. "Obesity, that's your trouble. Suffered from it myself once. Obesity, flatulence, wind round the heart, it all comes to the same thing. Play golf?"

Mr. Turner did not play golf. He grew violet geraniums. "No," he said.

"Ah," said the stranger. "No exercise. I had an idea that was the trouble. Men of your age generally start taking less exercise instead of taking more, as they should. I dare say you eat three good meals a day, and every ounce of food you swallow is turned by your digestive organs into one of two things—energy or fat. Nature hates waste, you know, and your digestion is so arranged that it only produces as much energy as you consume. What happens then?"

Mr. Turner looked puzzled.

"I'll tell you," said the stranger. "Because you don't take enough exercise to use up the energy your food is capable of providing, your digestive organs follow Nature's law and turn it into fat. And the more weight you put on the less exercise you can take, until one of these days as you walk down the

street you will put too big a strain on your heart, and there you are."

"My word!" said Lionel Turner, "it's a vicious circle. But I don't get time for any exercise."

"Of course not," said the stranger; "that was my trouble. But I went to a fellow who knew what he was talking about, and he put me on the right tack. What you want is what I had—concentrated exercise. Just a few minutes every morning spent in the right way will do the trick for you without wasting effort or time."

"What do I do?"

"You lie on your bed on your back," the stranger told Mr. Turner. "Draw your knees up towards your chin, and stretch your arms above your head. Then shoot your feet forward violently, at the same time swinging your arms to your sides in a semicircle. Do that a dozen times every morning, and you'll find it will make a big difference."

Until Lionel Turner was told that he suffered from obesity his heart had never given him any trouble. But all that day he was conscious of the fact that it was beating in a most unorthodox manner. Just when it had been behaving normally for five minutes, setting Mr. Turner's fears at rest, it would give a big jump and then a flutter. Once for nearly half a minute it stopped altogether. Mr. Turner was about to ring up for an ambulance

when it started off again with such tremendous thuds that he had to stamp his feet on the floor to prevent his colleagues hearing them.

All that night his ordeal continued, and at half-past seven in the morning when Gladys the maid brought his shaving-water and his wife called upstairs to him that his breakfast would be ready in a quarter of an hour, he was ready to try anything. He pushed back the bed-clothes and lay on the bed on his back. Then he stretched his arms above his head, pulled his knees up to his chin and shot his feet forward violently, at the same time swinging his arms to his sides in a semicircle. There was a loud crash and a cry of anguish as Lionel Turner's feet struck the iron rails at the foot of the bed. Mrs. Turner rushed to the foot of the stairs and listened.

"What are you doing, Lionel?" she asked. "Are you getting out of bed?"

"I can't," said Mr. Turner. "My feet are stuck in the rails."

It has already been explained that Mr. Turner was cautious and careful by nature. During their many years of married life Mrs. Turner had come to look upon him as a steady-going fellow who never got caught up in things. In consequence, when he told her that his feet were stuck in the rail of the bed she did not believe him. She thought that he was playing some mild joke, so she came upstairs to see for herself. She found her husband lying on his back on the bed, with his feet poking through the iron rails at the bottom.

"Come along, Lionel," she said, "don't be silly! Breakfast will be spoiled."

"But I can't get them out," said Mr. Turner, writhing about on the bed. "I can't, really. What can we do? How can I get to the office?"

By this time Mrs. Turner realized that her husband was speaking in earnest, so she gave the problem thought.

"I don't know what can be done without spoiling the bed," she told him. "Perhaps if you lie there for a while your feet will get cooler, and then you can get them out. I'll bring up your breakfast, and then if you're still stuck I'll telephone to the office. I'd better tell them you have a cold."

To a man accustomed to action nothing brings greater misery than enforced idleness. Lionel Turner was in no physical pain, and the bed was very comfortable, but he ate his breakfast with a sober melancholy. He heard Mrs. Turner go off to telephone the office, pulled another pillow towards his head, and looked out of the window.

It was a clear bright morning, and Mr. Turner felt he was undergoing untold hardship. He had raised himself on his elbows to look at the geraniums in their window-boxes, when he suddenly found himself staring into the face of a man whose head and shoulders had unaccountably appeared outside Mr. Turner's first-floor bedroom.

"Good morning," said Mr. Turner to this apparition, feeling called upon to say something.

"Good morning, Sir," said the owner of the face.

"What do you want?" asked Mr. Turner.

"It's all right, Sir," said the man. "I won't disturb you, Sir. I've only come to clean the winders."

Until this moment the window-cleaner had been to Lionel Turner a mere cipher in his pocket-book. It had never occurred to him that the window-cleaner was a creature of flesh and blood and not just a little red item which appeared once a fortnight. Mr. Turner watched with admiration as the man clung perilously to the window-sill and dipped his swab into a bucket that hung from the top of an unseen ladder. And then as he watched him cleaning off the upper part of the window it struck Mr. Turner that a man who spent his life messing about on ladders must have found himself often in even worse predicaments than Mr. Turner's present one. Lionel Turner raised his head from his pillow again.

"I say, there," he said.

"Yes, Sir?" said the window-cleaner.

"I say," repeated Mr. Turner. "Did you ever get your feet stuck in anything?"

The window-cleaner dropped his swab in the bucket, and scratched the top of his head with his right hand. "I can't say as I 'ave, Sir," he said—"not properly stuck. I've fell off enough ladders in me time, and once I got me 'ead stuck in one of those there sash winders. But I can't say as I've ever got me feet stuck in anything."

"You say you once had your head stuck?" asked Lionel Turner.

"Yes, Sir, properly stuck, it were."

"What did you do?"

"I hollered, Sir—hollered properly, I did."

"Yes, yes," said Lionel Turner, "but what I mean is, how did you get it out?"

"Well, Sir," said the window-cleaner, "when I'd hollered, Sir, a gentleman come and lifted the winder up, Sir."

Lionel Turner turned this over in his mind for a few moments, but it did not seem to help him.

"I say," he said at length, "what I

mean is that I've got my feet stuck between the rails of the bed. I thought you might know some way of getting them out."

The window-cleaner dropped his swab again and peered through the pane.

"Bless me, Sir!" he declared; "that's a pretty pickle, ain't it, Sir? I never heard of anybody doing that before, although I've seen plenty of children get their heads stuck in park railings and the like."

"Really?" said Mr. Turner, feeling that at last he was getting somewhere. "Now, tell me, what do they do?"

"'Ollers theirselves 'oarse, they do," said the window-cleaner.

"No, no," said Mr. Turner, anxious to avoid any hollering; "but how do they get out?"

"They don't, Sir," said the window-cleaner. "Never get out." Mr. Turner shuddered. "Leastways, Sir, not till the fire brigade comes and gets 'em out."

Lionel Turner's heart gave a jump. "The fire brigade?" he asked.

"Yes, Sir," said the window-cleaner.

"I didn't know they did that sort of thing."

"Bless you, Sir, yes, Sir," said the window-cleaner. "That's what they do most of the time, Sir, when there ain't no fires. That and 'auling 'orses out of areas what 'ave fallen in."

"Do you think they would come and get my feet out of these bed-rails?" asked Mr. Turner eagerly.

The window-cleaner scratched his head again.

"Well, Sir," he said slowly. "I shouldn't like to say, Sir, for sure. You see, Sir, that there bed-rail ain't, rightly speaking, the same as a park rail, Sir, because it ain't in a public place. I 'aven't never 'eard of the fire brigade coming and getting nobody's feet out of a bed-rail."

Lionel Turner lay back on his bed

again and reflected. The window-cleaner had raised his hopes and dashed them again. He felt like a shipwrecked mariner who, sitting upon his lonely isle, sees the smoke of a distant steamer approach and retreat again. Nevertheless the conversation had established an unalterable fact. Had Lionel Turner's feet been caught in a park railing, the fire brigade would have released him. Suddenly as he thought things over Mr. Turner's countenance brightened. He raised his head again and called out to the window-cleaner.

"I say," he said, "open the window and come in here a minute." The window-cleaner climbed through the window and stood at the foot of Mr. Turner's bed.

"That bed-rail isn't very heavy, is it?" Lionel Turner asked him.

"Well, no, Sir," said the window-cleaner. "I don't think so, Sir."

"Then lift it off," said Mr. Turner.

"Come on, man, lift it off!"

The window-cleaner looked at him with a puzzled expression.

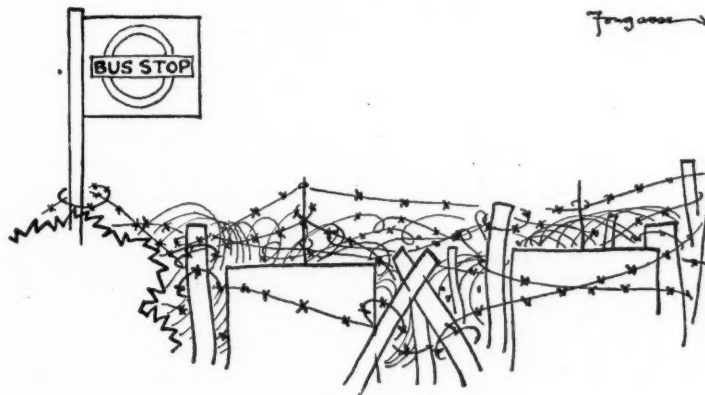
"Don't you see?" said Mr. Turner.

"If you can carry it horizontally just above the ground, I can walk between the rails. Then we can go to the park."

Mr. Turner's plan was a simple one. When he reached the park he lay on his back on the grass and instructed the window-cleaner to sink the legs of the bed into the ground. Within a few minutes, he thought, someone would walk by and see him lying there with his feet stuck and would summon the fire brigade. But when he was safely entrenched, Mr. Turner thought of an improvement. "Here," he said to the window-cleaner. "You can telephone to the fire brigade on your way back and tell them I want them urgently. That will save time."

"Yes, Sir," said the window-cleaner.

When Mrs. Turner returned from telephoning her husband's office she





*"Don't hurry, Mother—they can't hit the WHOLE common."  
"No, it's the bit I'M on I'm thinking about!"*

went upstairs to see whether he wanted a second cup of tea. One end of the bed was resting on the floor, and Mr. Turner and the bed-rail had vanished. Mrs. Turner was puzzled. She went downstairs again, opened the front door, and looked up and down the street. There was no sign of him. Mrs. Turner was still standing at her front door when there was a tremendous noise, and a fire engine drew up before her and started to disgorge firemen.

"Where's the fire?" one of the firemen shouted to Mrs. Turner.

"What fire?" she asked.

"The fire that's here," said the fireman.

Mrs. Turner turned round and stared at the house.

"There isn't any fire," she said.

"There must be," said the fireman. "Somebody rang up a minute or two ago and asked us to hurry to this address."

"There must be some mistake," said Mrs. Turner firmly. "Nobody rang up from here. We never have a fire. We have the chimneys swept regularly."

The firemen climbed on to their engine and drove away again. Mrs. Turner went into the house and asked Gladys if she had seen Mr. Turner, but Gladys had been having her breakfast in the kitchen, and knew nothing about him.

"Ah, well," said Mrs. Turner, "perhaps he has found some way of getting out."

Meanwhile Mr. Turner lay on the grass in the park with his feet stuck through the bed-rail, and gradually realized that he was as far from getting out as ever. Quite early on he knew that the window-cleaner must have bungled the summoning of the fire brigade, but this did not worry him. There were plenty of people about, and before long one of them would be sure

to notice his plight. It was not until nearly an hour later that Mr. Turner's boredom gave way to apprehension. For he then became aware of the fact that the people who were passing by had not only seen him but were staring at him, and that a small group standing about fifty yards away from him were rapidly becoming a crowd. For Lionel Turner had made a psychological error. He had assumed that if people saw a man lying on the grass in a public park with his feet poking through a bed-rail they would immediately help him out. He had forgotten that nine people out of ten, on seeing a man in that predicament, would believe that he was enjoying it.

Mr. Turner's continued absence did not alarm Mrs. Turner at all. She thought he had found some way of extricating his feet, but that he had damaged the bed-rail in doing so and had taken it to be mended on his way



to the office. Accordingly Mrs. Turner spent a normal day. She went out shopping in the morning and had a little sleep in the afternoon. At four o'clock she came downstairs again, instructed Gladys to prepare the vegetables for Mr. Turner's dinner, and made herself a cup of China tea. At half-past four Mrs. Turner heard the boy deliver the evening paper, so she went into the hall to fetch it. She opened it beside her tea-tray, and as she glanced at the front page her face set in a stony stare of horror. For there, for all the world to see, was a large picture of Lionel Turner lying on his back on the grass in the park, with his feet sticking through a bed-rail.

As soon as Mrs. Turner had recovered from the shock caused by this horrid discovery she read the story which accompanied the picture. It was headed POLICE REMOVE BED-RAIL SQUATTER FROM PUBLIC PARK, and it told how in the morning hours a man clad in pyjamas had attracted a large crowd by sitting on the grass in the park with his feet sticking through a bed-rail. The tale was embellished with references to pole squatters and fence sitters, and suggested that the man in the picture was merely the first of an army of bed-rail squatters. In the end it informed Mrs. Turner that her husband had been removed by the police and detained.

It took Mrs. Turner several hours to effect Mr. Turner's release. She brought him home eventually, none the worse for his adventure, but the publicity came near to wrecking his career. The photograph was recognized by several of his colleagues, and Mr. Turner was asked for an explanation. He had to pretend that he had a cousin of rather low mentality, who bore a close resemblance to him.

Lionel Turner never attempted to cure his obesity again. In later years he became quite portly, but he did not let this worry him. He always declared that the best way to avoid being short of breath was to stop running to catch trains.

o o

## To a Little Dog

O MY little dog,  
when I look at you I think  
smugly  
of the dogs belonging to other people!

For other people's dogs are,  
as everyone knows,  
the wrong breed to begin with

and misshapen  
at that;

and, furthermore,  
deceive no one but  
their infatuated owners  
with  
what everyone else knows to be  
cupboard-love;

other people's dogs  
have fleas  
which  
only those same infatuated owners  
insist  
cannot attack the human body;

other people's dogs  
are always  
perfectly disgusting  
and often  
sick;  
but the main point  
is that they're *dull*  
and their owners  
to be  
pitied.

O my little dog,  
*my* little dog,  
when other people look at you I think  
smugly  
how they must envy *me*!



*"You may find it dull here—Kinderbruck is not Hamm."*



"Had a devil of a job getting the 'Lifts for Service Men' badge."

### Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

#### The Price of Neutrality

ANYBODY who doubts the calculated nature of *The Rape of the Netherlands* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 7/6) by Germany only needs to read Mr. VAN KLEFFENS' able and damning account of that villainy to be forever freed from his hesitations. As Dutch Minister for Foreign Affairs ever since July 1939, Mr. VAN KLEFFENS anxiously watched the gathering of the storm that was ultimately to overwhelm his own peace-loving country. Filled from the day on which he assumed his arduous duties with "dark forebodings," he reveals beyond question that the menace to Dutch independence came from Germany alone. It is therefore all the more difficult to understand why the Dutch Government persisted so blindly in its disastrous policy of strict neutrality. This knowledge that invasion—if it came—would come from one quarter only, afforded time to mass their armed forces and to summon their friends to their aid. Neglect of this opportunity cost Holland the temporary loss of its cherished independence. A tragic testimony to the fateful consequences of too great caution in dangerous days.

#### Inadequate Portraiture

Mr. ROBERT SENCOURT's biographical study—*Winston Churchill* (FABER AND FABER, 8/6)—is not so much an appraisal of the man of the hour as a garment of rather disingenuous propaganda uncomfortably twisted about a great figure. The career of our national dragon-slayer, with its interplay of high adventure, profound study, artistic sensibility and political finesse, is essentially kaleidoscopic, but Mr. SENCOURT, though recognizing that there have been

from time to time changes in the picture, claims for his own purposes only just so much as seems profitable of a man far too great for his understanding. In many patches of inaccurate prose, rather blotchily purple in aspect, he joins Bolshevism and Democracy in one common blast of distaste, showering epithets on Russians, Jews and Freemasons with a kind of ultra-Gallic fervour. Among this storm of cock-shying His Holiness the POPE puts in an occasional embarrassed appearance, while an ill-timed eulogy of Marshal PÉTAIN is the more remarkable because the Marshal's recent manifestations virtually destroy the writer's argument. All this is not to say the book is without interest. On such a theme that might be impossible; but it is unworthy of the PRIME MINISTER and wholly fails to recognize the virtues of Democracy at war.

#### The Young Idea

Here's a binding from A. and C. BLACK,  
N. M. SEDGWICK has authored the same,  
It teaches good sportsmen the every knack  
Of shooting both wild-fowl and game.  
Hill and manor occur; here are feather and fur;  
Here are woodcock and duck and what-not;  
Here are tricks too to shun when you first use a gun,  
So the book is well-named *The Young Shot*.

You will learn how to gain the esteem  
Of the ferret, that good little beast,  
Here the rook is a thesis, the pigeon a theme,  
And (since rogues should be duly deceased)  
Here is vermin to kill, yet the best of goodwill  
To the badger and fox we will lend:  
And if you would make a young dog could you take  
Better wit than herein to that end?

Here's practice made plain for the boy,  
Ere he whistles his spaniel to heel,  
To learn from a duck and a wooden decoy,  
From a rabbit to learn a great deal;  
To learn the way how from a squab on a bough  
Till he shoots "like a book," Sir, say you?  
Which, putting it pat, I will promise you that,  
If he shoots like *this* book, he *will* do.



"Who's running the war, me or your mother?"



Officer (instructing recruits in signalling). "DIDN'T YOU GET THAT MESSAGE?"

Recruit. "YES, SIR: 'THREE TAUBS AND A ZEPLIN COMIN' OVER THE 'ILL.'"

Officer. "THEN WHY THE DEUCE DIDN'T YOU SEND IT ON?"

Recruit. "WELL, SIR, I COULDN'T 'ARDLY BELIEVE IT."

G. D. Armour, December 30th, 1914

### Green Memories

Somewhere in his middle thirties a year or two ago, Mr. HENRY GREEN decided to write his autobiography. He had been born "three years after one war and nine before another, too late for both." But not too late for the present one, concerning which he says "it would be asking too much to pretend one had a chance to live." That does not worry him particularly, except that there may not be time to write anything, such as another novel, that requires more chewing over than reminiscences. So in *Pack My Bag* (HOGARTH PRESS, 7/6) he sets down how he felt at home, at a preparatory school, at a public school, at Oxford and in his father's factory. He does it with a graceful mixture of candour and reticence, making a case of himself and for himself, putting in bits which will interest or rile such anonymous friends or acquaintances as may recognize themselves, quoting and

criticizing passages from his own prose, and generally having a fairly good if rather deprecatory time. This readers may share with him—those, that is to say, who do not mind reading and re-reading and trying to tidy up sentences which, owing to his economy in punctuation-marks, are not always readily intelligible. There are one or two, indeed, not very important, which seem to resist all efforts at tidying. Perhaps he was in too much of a hurry.

### Earthly Twins

Miss NETTA SYRETT has the good gift of making the incidents of her books spring from interplay of character rather than pressure of plot. In her latest novel, *Gemini* (BLES, 7/6), we meet among other characters a middle-aged widower and a pretty young widow earning a living for her little sons as an interior decorator, and they very soon decide



to marry. It is the strange and difficult attitude of these boys, "identical" twins, towards each other that causes most of the action of the story. They are very much alike in looks and, with one or two important differences, in nature, and violent antagonism and a deep need of each other are mingled painfully in their make-up. At school and later on this causes trouble enough, but when *Niel* becomes infatuated with a worthless woman who plays *Donald* off against him there is very nearly tragedy. The suggested explanation of the twins' characters seems to be that in some previous life they had been lovers who had never learned to agree. However that may be, their story holds the reader's attention.

### Birch-Bark and Tantrums

ANAHAREO as a small girl in a temper used to get back on her aunts by picking off their chickens with a .22 rifle. Later on she plunged through rotten ice rather than do as she was told, attacked her unresisting partner with his knife, risked his canoe and her own life in unknown rapids, utterly refused to marry him because she had quarrelled with her father confessor who ought to bless the match. Between whiles she was flooded with penitence, triumphant and passionate again at every incalculable turn. On one occasion she went to town to find work—as a waitress, of all things—her baggage consisting of a knapsack, and a wolf in a crate. When the wolf got lost she spent six despairing days searching for it and starving in sympathy. Then she went home. Her story—*My Life with Grey Owl* (DAVIES, 8/6)—is anything but a mere sweeping up of fragments from the famous beaver series. The adorable beavers indeed play but a small part in it, and Indian ANAHAREO herself is inevitably the centre of a picture made up with mystical, incredible GREY OWL against a background of Canadian forest—camp-fires, snow and soft furry creatures. This is a book full of slang, bad temper and surprises, not to be missed for a score of conventional stories.

### Urbs in Rure

The reviewer who feels impelled to treat Mrs. M. VIVIAN HUGHES to a taste of her own technique in reviewing unattractive books—that is to praise the paper and print, and damn by implication the matter and manner—should hold his malicious hand. For *A London Family Between the Wars* (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 7/6) sets out to tell the valiant story of a widow's successful launching of three sons—even though it does, regrettably enough, manage to inspire distaste for the heroine and no particular interest in the three heroes. The distaste is chiefly due to the complacency that so insidiously besets educators of youth and inspectors of educators of youth. Mrs. HUGHES, you gather, has played both parts; yet if she had set out to tell the whole story of her scholastic career she would probably have selected kindlier feats than the small scores off more lightly armoured opponents that await you in these pages. The greater part of their story, however, is domestic: the story of a housewife who bungled two removals and gave up

growing vegetables for good after one pardonable failure. The scene of these exploits is a once rural neighbourhood fifteen miles from Charing Cross.

### The Play's the Thing!

"'You must fight your own way in the world, Julia,' was a remark frequently made to me by my mother when I was still but a little girl." With those words Miss JULIA NEILSON begins her autobiography, *This for Remembrance* (HURST AND BLACKETT, 15/-), and leaves Mr. A. P. HERBERT to round it off in verse—"Oh! mistress of a hundred arts, you never learned to be unkind." Those two sentences make good comment on the personal quality of the author who so modestly attributes her success to "plenty of hard work, some good fortune and many wonderful friends." The whole book glows with graciousness, friendliness and humour, and it is less of an autobiography than a loving tribute to FRED TERRY. Perhaps the best anecdote tells of "Sweet Nell's" unrehearsed sneeze and the consequent flight of a loose wig when she was impersonating Judge JEFFREYS. The next best story with a happy ending describes her son's mistaken entry into a German trench during the last war and his cry of "It's Terry, you know—Dennis Neilson Terry!" as he faced his pet waiter from Soho. But the book is full of happiness—a tonic in these days.

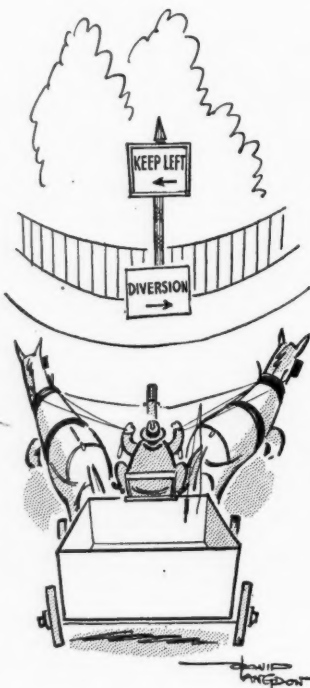
### Exits for Guys

It may be taken as a sign that Mr. A. J. EVANS has a deep respect for the science of finger-prints (though not for all who claim to be experts in it) that the chief factor in the mystery of *Who's the Guy?* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 8/3) is a trail of absolutely authentic prints which lead completely in the wrong direction. Whither they lead and whence it would not be fair to reveal, though it may be said, since both the title and the wrapper indicate an association with GUY FAWKES' day, there is a human guy and more than a little doubt as to its identity. It may be said too that the mystery surrounds not so much what is done as the method of doing it, so that in the end all, however reprehensible, who have earned the sympathy of the readers, escape the clutches of the law. Since Mr. A. A. MILNE in *The Fourth Wall* and Mr. ARMSTRONG in *Ten Minute Alibi* allowed us to see the murder committed on the stage and kept us in thrilled suspense as to whether the weak link in the chain of circumstantial evidence would be discovered, there has not been a better story of this kind. And that is saying a good deal.

### Glissando—A Song

WHO pointa da gun  
Who raisa da yell  
Who starta da fun  
But no ringa da bell

Who maka da stink  
In da clear desert sun,  
Cock da snoop at de brink  
(gliss.) Then maka da run. J. P.







Steelline

"Won't it be WONDERFUL when peace is restored once more?"

## Christmas in the Office

OTHER years of course you'd start talking about Christmas as soon as everybody was back from the summer holidays all spent up and hoping for a Christmas bonus and wondering how much holiday we shall have, and you turn over the thin bit that is all that's left of the calendar to see what day it's on, and someone says it doesn't seem a year since last Christmas, does it, and you think you'll have to be ordering the refills soon.

But this year Christmas Day might as well fall on Shrove Tuesday for all the difference it makes in our office. The Works are coming in half of them each day, but we don't know yet what we're doing. It's just the same in the summer. Mr. Head never can make up his mind whether it's better to have me here when he's away, so that we're not both of us not there together, or me away when he's away, so that we are both of us here together when we get back. So Doris and I still don't know whether our Christmas is going to be on Christmas Day or at the New Year.

Though I wouldn't mind myself working on Christmas Day for once. It'd always be something to look back on, and then there'd be the New-Year Christmas to look forward to if you hadn't had your Christmas on Christmas Day already.

War or no war, Christmas still seems to get into everything. I can always tell because the capital X on my typewriter wants cleaning out with a pin just as often as the other letters nowadays, and we know to add the compliments of the season to everything if Mr. Head forgets. This year Doris didn't need any telling to make her own shorthand contraction for *thank-you-for-your-good-wishes-which-we-heartily-reciprocate*, and by now she's got it boiled down to *thwchrctr*.

I will say she's sticking pretty well to her shorthand now the dictaphone's off. A pity it came on trial just the week Mr. Head lost his voice. He caught a bad cold out with the Home Guard the night he got his tin hat at last—and then he went and got a bit of shrapnel in his leg. And by the time his voice came back we were Saving for Victory.

The worst of Christmas is it never rains but it pours and you get so many chocolates and cigarettes and things all at once you haven't really time to enjoy them. That's why I always like a firm with a Scotsman in it and then

there's some excitement at the New Year as well, especially if he buys a home-made cake or brings in some of that fancy shortbread in tins with kilts on (no oat cakes for me, thank you; I'd as soon eat baked loafah).

But one office I was in there was a Scotsman whose train didn't go till 10.25 on Christmas Eve night and he would stick there spoiling all the fun long after all the other partners had gone off and left us to it. Even ordinary nights he'd sit there working till seven. I often wonder what he does with himself at nights nowadays.

One blessing this Christmas, however! No plum puddings to send off to



*"Now would you like London giving news in Norwegian, or Breslau giving news in Portuguese, or Rome giving news in Bulgarian, or Paris giving news in Arabic, or a station that I presume must be Buenos Aires, as it's giving news in Lithuanian with a strong Swabian accent?"*

foreign firms, and that's something to be thankful for if you've ever tried to squash a German firm's name on to a luggage label.

We're not having a Christmas tree this year but I suppose we shall all go into the Works as usual on Christmas Eve afternoon. We're taking the Works typists a box of crackers this time (though Doris says they'll only tell us they knew we were crackers already) and we shall all eat a piece of their burnt Christmas cake and say how good it is. To give the canteen their due though, mince pies are the one thing they can do that's fit to eat, so there'll be one happy month at least for 1941.

And then we shall just have to make time for the carols. I want us to have them down in the shelter anyway

because Jim's been decorating it with me (you've got to have your boy-friend in the firm these days if you want to see anything of him at all) and he's going to take a flashlight. Besides, if we do start them upstairs, it'll only mean we may have to rush down any moment, and it'll be like those nights the sirens are late and you just can't settle to anything till they do go.

But there's a lot to be done before then. Everything is topsy-turvy this year and that's the trouble. Other years the difficulty at Christmas was how to find time for the work. This year it's how to find time for Christmas. What with the night post going out in the afternoon, and all the parcels to be got off to the men and girls who've joined up, and Doris with her chilblains to rub every day, our filing is somewhere back in November and all you can do is push everything into the Outstanding basket and trust to luck. And then Mr. Head comes out looking for something and says he doesn't know what you girls do with yourselves all day.

All day! I like that! One of these fine days we'll be getting to the office too late to get away early. And then there's our own Christmas shopping to get in as well. The afternoon off was a morning this year, but that doesn't go very far when the lunch-hour's not much good nowadays if you're going to be back in time to fit tea in.

Then, as if we weren't rushed off our feet already, Doris had a birthday this week and I didn't know what to give her till I thought of some of those artificial pure-silk stockings to see how they wear before I get any myself. She was ever so thrilled to find she came under the same star as Mr. Churchill. "Yes, and so do a twelfth of all the other people in the world" I squashed her with, and wished I hadn't because Mr. Head buzzed for me just then to ask about the raffle, and by the time I got back with half a notebook full of shorthand she'd given her book of horoscopes to the waste-paper men before I'd had a minute to look at mine.

It does all make you wonder sometimes what we used to do with ourselves all day long when there wasn't a war on—let alone Christmas as well.

"RAIDERS TRIED TO RING LONDON"  
Heading in "Evening News."

We aren't sorry they were troubled.



### *The Evzones to Europe*

THE bandits came across the hills and called upon our neighbours,  
 They took away their corn-lands and feasted on the spoil;  
 A dark and ugly lot they were, with guns and tanks and sabres  
 And a passion for inquiring for the whereabouts of oil.  
 But they only came and did it for the sake of peace and order  
 And to stabilize the markets and to stimulate their trade;  
 There was never any question, when they trampled on the border  
 Of doing what they did do because they found it paid.

*For the Blackshirts and the Germans  
 Have a wonderful behaviour.  
 They are always preaching sermons,  
 And Adolf is a saviour  
 And Signor Mussolini is the Little Countries' Aid.*

The robbers broke the house next door and battered down the stables,  
 They carried off the cattle and commandeered the wine,  
 They cooked themselves a splendid meal and spread it on the tables,  
 And shouted through their megaphones before they went to dine:



"We only loot your foodstuffs to ensure collaboration,  
We had to take the blankets and the mattress off the bed  
For fear that you should suffer from industrial stagnation  
And a want of any outlet for your butter and your bread."

*For the system of the Axis  
Is a system full of mercies.  
It instantly relaxes  
When you open up your purses,  
And they always grant you pardon if they pound you on the head.*

But we were simple mountaineers without much sense or feeling,  
We never thought machine-guns were substitutes for banks,  
We could not learn the lesson of co-operative dealing,  
We trapped them in the passes and we took them on the flanks;

*And not for many seasons  
Shall be revealed, if ever,  
Their economic reasons  
For mutual endeavour  
Among the mountain gorges where lie the Italian tanks.*

And with these few words, and his respectful tribute to the Army in Egypt which has struck another mighty blow against the freebooters, his salutations also to the Navy, the R.A.F. and all workers for Freedom at home and abroad, Mr. Punch places between the forepaws of the Sphinx, who is supposed to understand the past, the present and the future, his

## One Hundred and Ninety-Ninth Volume



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